

## Message Text

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62

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01 MC-02

TRSE-00 EB-11 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 L-03 COME-00

ACDA-19 SAJ-01 PRS-01 DRC-01 /112 W

----- 008823

R 061650Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 081

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

CINCUSAFE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 1392

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS/ MASS, BEXP, NATO, BE

SUBJECT: REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT FOR F-104GS

REF: STATE 38015 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: DEFENSE MINISTER BELIEVES MESSAGE TRANSMITTED  
PER REFTEL WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN BELGIAN DECISION,  
AND NOTED ESPECIALLY THE POSSIBILITY THAT DOD WILL  
COMPLEMENT AND SUPPORT INDUSTRY OFFSET PROPOSALS. HE SAID  
THAT ONLY THE COBRA AND SUPER MIRAGE ARE IN COMPETITION,  
ALTHOUGH SAAB HAS BEEN MAKING MAJOR EFFORT. MINISTER HAS  
TOLD THE FRENCH THAT IF FRENCH POLICY VIS-A-VIS EUROPE  
AND THE MIDDLE EAST CONTINUES ON ITS PRESENT PATH, BELGIUM  
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WILL BE FORCED TO INTRODUCE POLITICAL ELEMENTS INTO ITS  
DECISION ON THE F-104G REPLACEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. I DELIVERED MOST WELCOME MESSAGE CONTAINED REFTEL TO MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE VANDEN BOEYNANTS (VDB) ON MARCH 6, EARLIEST DATE ON WHICH HE WAS ABLE TO RECEIVE ME. AFTER READING THE MESSAGE, VDB SAID HE REALIZED THAT IT CONTAINED ELEMENTS THAT WOULD BEAR VERY IMPORTANTLY ON THE F-104G REPLACEMENT DECISION. HE NOTED ESPECIALLY THE STATEMENT THAT "THE DOD WILL ALSO CONSIDER COMPLEMENTING AND SUPPORTING THE US INDUSTRIAL OFFSET PROPOSALS UNDER TERMS AND ARRANGEMENTS TO BE MUTUALLY AGREED" (PARA 4 (D) OF REFTEL).

3. VDB SAID THAT, GIVEN THE TIME NEEDED TO FORM A GOVERNMENT AFTER THE MARCH 10 ELECTIONS, A BELGIAN DECISION ON THE F-104G REPLACEMENT WILL TAKE "SEVERAL MONTHS". HE SPECULATED THAT A GOVERNMENT MIGHT NOT BE IN PLACE UNTIL AS LATE AS JUNE, AND WHEN I ASKED WHETHER HE THOUGHT A DECISION WOULD BE REACHED BY SEPTEMBER, HE COULD REPLY ONLY THAT HE HOPED SO.

4. THE MINISTER SAID THAT ONLY THE NORTHROP P530 COBRA AND THE KDASSAULT SUPER MIRAGE ARE IN SERIOUS CONTENTION INSOFAR AS BELGIUM IS CONCERNED. HE ADDED THAT SAAB WAS MAKING A BIG EFFORT TO SELL THE VIGGEN AND HAD MADE AN OFFER THAT AMOUNTED TO 150 PERCENT ECONOMIC COMPENSATION. VDB SURMISED THAT THE SEDES VIEW THE F-104G REPLACEMENT SALE AS A MAJOR POTENTIAL VEHICLE FOR COMMERCIAL AND, PERHAPS, POLITICAL INFLUENCE IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY MARKET. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE PROSPECTS FOR SWEDISH EC MEMBERSHIP WILL REMAIN DIM OWING TO THE STRONG NEUTRALITY FACTOR IN SWEDISH POLICY.

5. STRESSING THAT HE WAS SPEAKING CONFIDENTIALLY, VDB SAID THAT IN A RECENT CONVERSATION ON F-104G REPLACEMENT WITH THE FRENCH MILITARY ATTACHE, HE (VDB) HAD SAID THAT IF FRANCE CONTINUES ITS CURRENT POLICIES, BELGIUM WILL HAVE TO INTRODUCE A POLITICAL ELEMENT INTO ITS CONSIDERATION OF THE COMPETING AIRCRAFT. HE TOLD THE ATTACHE THAT FRANCE APPARENTLY WISHES TO HAVE THE BENEFITS OF EC MEMBERSHIP  
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WHILE ENJOYING AT THE SAME TIME THE BENEFITS OF INDEPENDENT ACTION. MOREOVER, HE SAID, THE BELGIANS CANNOT ABIDE SITUATION IN WHICH FRANCE DEALS INDIVIDUALLY WITH THE ARABS FOR OIL AT THE EXPENSE OF BELGIUM.

6. VDB NOTED THAT HE MAY NOT HOLD THE DEFENSE PORTFOLIO

IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT, BUT REPEATED THAT THE USG MESSAGE IS VERY IMPORTANT AND ADDED THAT HE WILL DO WHAT HE CAN TO ASSURE THAT ITS CONTENTS ARE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED.

7. THE MINISTER UNDERSTOOD THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ORAL ASSURANCE I GAVE HIM AS CONTAINED IN THE FIRST SENTENCE OF PARA 7 OF REFTTEL, AND HE REMARKED ON THE FINANCIAL ADVANTAGES THAT WOULD ENSUE FROM A COMMON AIRCRAFT SELECTION BY THE COUNTRIES INVOLVED.

8. COMMENT: I APPRECIATE THE MESSAGE FURNISHED IN REFTTEL. I BELIEVE THAT IT WILL STRENGTHEN THE PROSPECTS FOR A PURCHASE OF A US AIRCRAFT TO REPLACE F-104GS IN BELGIUM AND OTHER ALLIED COUNTRIES. REQUEST THAT ADDRESSEES FULLY PROTECT THE INFORMATION REGARDING VDB'S WARNINGS TO THE FRENCH AS REPORTED IN PARA 5 ABOVE. I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT TO SEE FOREIGN MINISTER VAN ELSLANDE ON MARCH 7, AND I WILL DELIVER COPIES OF THE USG MESSAGE TO HIM AND THEREAFTER TO THE MINISTERS OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. STRAUSS-HUPE

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Concepts:** FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, PROCUREMENT, PETROLEUM, FOREIGN RELATIONS, MILITARY PLANS, MILITARY SALES  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
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**TAGS:** MASS, BEXP, BE, XF, FR, NATO  
**To:** STATE  
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